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THE REHABILITATION OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE, AND THE PLACE OF CHEMISTRY IN IT¹

THERE are two subjects which at present occupy the focus of public interest in the United States; namely, the American tariff and the American college. One difference between the situations in the two cases seems to be that whereas a few people are strongly in favor of the tariff, nobody has a good word to say for the college. Perhaps a reservation should be made in regard to the latter; one senator, apparently, thinks that the negative quality of inefficiency is better than none at all. His words are: "I love my *alma mater* for all she has enabled me to be and to do, in spite of herself." He finds virtue in her very laxness.

Can we as chemists confidently feel that Flexner and Birdseye in their voluminous writings, and the myriad commencement orators in their more or less seasonable outpourings, have all spoken with a definite mental reservation? Can it be that all the unpleasant things that they have said were intended to apply to the whole structure of the American college, with the sole exception of its department of chemistry? I fear not. If then the American college is an Augean stable, shall we wait in the hope that some Hercules will come and clean it all in twenty-four hours, or shall we take off our coats and tackle the problem of our own stall?

¹An address before the Section of Education of the American Chemical Society, at the Detroit meeting, July, 1909.